CHAPTER 7

Regulation, Regime, and Practice in Urban Politics

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In this chapter, I want to examine the relationship between urban regime theory and regulation theory in terms of their *theoretical commensurability*. However attractive the integration of the two perspectives may appear, it can only provide a sound framework for understanding urban politics if there is at least no contradiction between the conceptual bases of the different elements. As regulation theory has many versions, I begin by outlining briefly my understanding of regulation theory and of its relationship to urban politics. I go on to suggest that this account, although helpful, has inherent limits, which derive from the methodology of regulation theory itself. One question addressed by this book is whether urban regime theory can be linked to regulation theory to allow these limits to be transcended and thereby to enable urban theorists to produce stronger, more powerful or more complete analyses of urban politics. Although much in regime theory is commendable, some conceptual ambiguities challenge its compatibility with the regulation approach. I therefore conclude by proposing a reworked formulation of the regime idea for interpreting urban politics. In place of the rational choice model of political practice that underlies Clarence Stone's (1989) formulation of the concept of urban regimes, I propose an

approach based on a critical engagement with aspects of the work of Pierre Bourdieu. This focuses on the relationship between political practice and processes and sites of regulation and counterregulation.[1]

Regulation Theory and Urban Politics

Together with colleagues, I have spelled out an approach to regulation theory and its relationship to urban politics in detail elsewhere (Bakshi, Goodwin, Painter, & Southern, 1995; Goodwin & Painter, in press; Painter, 1991, 1995; Painter & Goodwin, 1995) and there is space here for only a brief summary. Regulation theory starts from the premise that complex social systems are conflictual, contradictory, and crisis prone. These characteristics generate tendencies to failure of system reproduction and thus to system breakdown and collapse. Historically, however, although such failures and breakdowns do occasionally occur, there are numerous instances of successful system reproduction despite these countervailing crisis tendencies. Systems in which crisis tendencies are mitigated in this way are said to be "regulated." The process of regulation is nonnecessary; if it were guaranteed by the operation of the system's core features the system would be self-regulating. In contrast, regulation arises contingently, and is not necessarily, or even usually, the intended result of a deliberate strategy, though it frequently *can* be explained as the product of the interaction of the unintended consequences of intentional actions.

This formal account of regulation tells us nothing about the social content of the systems being regulated. In practice most regulation theory has taken the object of regulation to be the economy and, in particular, the process of capital accumulation within industrial capitalism. There is no intrinsic reason why the approach could not also be applied to other complex systems such as the state, or an urban political system, however. For now I shall concentrate on the case of the capitalist economy. Regulation theorists argue that the process of capital accumulation is reproduced at any given moment through the dynamic of the prevailing *regime of accumulation.* A regime of accumulation specifies the broad relationships between production, consumption, saving, and investment, and also defines the geographical extent and degree of autonomy of the circuit of capital (national, continental, global, etc.). A fundamental insight of regulation theory is that the history of capitalism has been marked by a succession of qualitatively different regimes of accumulation, each defining a different set of relationships between production, consumption, saving, and investment. Regulation theory shares with classical Marxism a recognition that abstract features

of the accumulation process are invariant over time (such as the existence of the wage relation) but places much more emphasis than did classical Marxism on the historically and geographically variable forms that those features take as the process of accumulation is revolutionized through successive phases of struggle, crisis, and restructuring.

Although the prevailing regime of accumulation describes the dynamic links between different elements of the accumulation process, it cannot guarantee their reproducibility over time and space. Indeed, the inherent crisis tendencies of the capitalist mode of production are expressed in the regime of accumulation as, for example, periods of underconsumption or, conversely, underinvestment. According to regulation theory, if the regime of accumulation survives (and that is not inevitable) it does so because the relationships between its elements are being *regulated.* Regulation theory regards regulation as a complex, uneven, and contingent (rather than functionally necessary) process. The mechanisms of regulation vary over time and across space but commonly include institutional forms, social relations in civil society, and cultural norms as well as those activities of the state and judicial systems that the term *regulation* more commonly connotes in Anglophone writing. It seems that the effectiveness of regulation often depends on, or is enhanced by, the contingent interaction of these mechanisms.

In conventional regulation theory it is often argued that regulatory mechanisms combine in integrated, relatively stable, and relatively coherent *modes of regulation.* In political terms, modes of regulation have sometimes been presented as historical grand compromises between capital and labor. The concept of mode of regulation has been criticized for tending to overemphasize stability at the expense of change, compromise at the expense of struggle, and structure at the expense of agency. For these reasons, as Mark Goodwin and I (in press) have argued elsewhere, it may be preferable to think of an historically variable *process of regulation* rather than a succession of discrete "modes" of regulation. This would admit the key regulationist points that cultural and institutional influences on accumulation are centrally important and that the nature and intensity of conflict vary, while recognizing that regulation is itself both the medium, object, and outcome of social struggles and conflicts and subject to crisis and restructuring.

Many regulation theorists identify the 30 years after the end of the Second World War as a period of particularly successful regulation in many industrialized capitalist countries. During this time, a regime of accumulation based on a link between mass production and mass consumption was made possible by regulation that drew together (among other things) (a) state involvement in setting minimum living standards, (b) institutionalized collective bargaining to

give workers a share of productivity gains, and (c) a "national" circuit of capital linked to national systems of monetary and financial regulation and an international system of stable exchange rates. Conventionally, regulation theorists have regarded these relationships as constituting a mode of regulation and have labeled it fordism.[2] With the breakdown of fordism from the mid-1970s onward, the regulatory process has undergone significant restructuring. Commentators disagree about the impact of these changes. For some they herald the emergence a fully fledged postfordist mode of regulation constituted around customized production, niche (rather than mass) consumption, flexible wage bargaining, and financial deregulation and globalization. Others accept that a new mode of regulation is a possibility but argue either that its development to date is at best embryonic (Jessop, 1992a) or that there are a variety of alternative feasible postfordisms. Another perspective uses the relative indeterminacy of future forms to argue in a normative fashion for one future "compromise" rather than another (Lipietz, 1992). Finally, some commentators argue that the present period is marked by the continuing turmoil of the breakdown of fordist forms and its aftermath, with little evidence that a new mode of regulation is emerging, or, under present conditions, could emerge (Peck & Tickell, 1994).

As well as differentiating capitalism through time, the concepts of regime of accumulation and mode of regulation can differentiate it across space, and partly for this reason geographers and urban and regional theorists have been particularly interested in the regulation approach. With its focus on the institutional and cultural influences on economic growth and development, regulation theory provides a way of understanding the spatially uneven character of economic change, at least in principle. In practice, regulation is often tacitly assumed to operate at the scale of the nation state. This makes some sense when we consider fordism (though the extent to which fordist regulation was socially and spatially differentiated within states has often been underestimated; Bakshi et al., 1995). There is no reason to suppose, however, that modes of regulation *must* be secured at the level of the nation-state, still less that the ongoing process of regulation (whether it constitutes a coherent mode or not) will be national.

Their concern with uneven development has led urban and regional researchers to propose different ways in which theories of regulation might be spatialized. Among others, Esser and Hirsch (1989) examined the impact of the supposed emergence of postfordism on urban and regional systems; Florida and Jonas (1991) discussed the connections between urban policy and modes of regulation; Jessop (1994) argued that the postfordist state will typically be hollowed out with functions shed downward to regional and local government and upward to international structures like the European Union; Peck and Tickell (1992) have discussed the concept of local modes of social regulation; Mayer

(1994) argued that postfordism will provide new opportunities in the practice of urban politics; and my colleagues and I proposed the concept of local regulatory capacity (Painter, Wood, & Goodwin, 1995).

These debates suggest that the issue of geographical scale is not in itself an insuperable problem of the regulation approach.[3] This means that any claim that regulation theory needs urban regime theory *because it deals with the urban scale* is misguided. It is untrue to say that regulation theory necessarily deals with large scale (regional, national, or international) and that regime theory is needed to fill in the gap at the urban or local scale. It is also fallacious to equate on the one hand macrolevel theories with abstraction and large geographical scales or on the other hand meso- and microlevel theories with successively more concrete analyses and successively smaller geographical scales. One can have abstract theories of micro processes, mesolevel theory does not apply exclusively to "middling" geographical scales, and concrete accounts can be written of large-scale processes. Therefore even if regulation theory is a macrolevel theory, that does not mean that it needs a mesolevel theory *to deal with the urban scale* (though it might need one for other reasons). Nevertheless there *are* limits to the usefulness of regulation theory. These derive not from the problems of addressing geographical scale but from its approach to explanation. If we are to argue that regime theory is a necessary complement to regulation theory, we must do so on the basis that it adopts an approach to explanation that is both compatible with regulation theory and that provides explanations of phenomena for which regulation theory cannot account.

The Limits of Regulation Theory

The debates around uneven development, scales of regulation, and the impact of regulation on urban and regional restructuring (and vice versa) represent a new level of sophistication in the development of the regulation approach. As the debates proceed, however, it is becoming clear that they are also revealing some limits of the regulationist framework as a method of analysis. The existence of such limits should not be taken to mean that the regulation approach is somehow "wrong," rather, there are some questions that it does not (or is unable to) address.

In crude terms, the regulation approach explains (certain characteristics of) the object of regulation (usually the development of capitalism) in terms of the process or mode of regulation (institutional forms, cultural norms, state struc-

tures). Actually, the explanation is more complex than this. Objects of regulation do not precede regulation, existing in some preregulatory limbo awaiting the emergence of a mode of regulation. Rather, processes and objects of regulation emerge together and are produced by one another. Nevertheless, the explanandum of conventional regulation theory is the process of capital accumulation, whereas its explanans is the complex of social, political, and cultural processes and practices that sustain accumulation in the face of its tendency toward crisis and collapse.

Within this explanatory schema, urban politics features (if at all) as a possible element in the explanans.[4] Regulation theory as written hitherto explains economic continuity and change in terms of (among other things) political processes. It is not an explanation of those political processes. This distinction is essential to avoid a slide into functionalism. The processes of regulation are identified by their effects on the accumulation of capital. To argue that certain contemporary changes in institutions, political practices, or cultural norms are accounted for by a shift from (for example) a fordist to a postfordist mode of regulation is to explain change by its effects (because it is the new mode of regulation that is produced by the changes, rather than vice versa).[5] Such an approach would be functionalist and thus fallacious.

Conventional regulation theory is good at explaining the dynamic of regulatory processes once they are established and the crisis tendencies that undermine regulation and produce regulatory breakdown and failure. Because modes of regulation are understood to be the product of the interaction of contingent phenomena, the concept of mode of regulation cannot explain the emergence of those phenomena in the first place. As Jessop (1990b) argues, "unless one examines the mediation of regulation in and through specific social practices and forces, regulation will either go unexplained or will be explained in terms of 'speculative' structural categories" (p. 319). This mediation is the focus of urban regime theory.

Though the form and nature of urban politics cannot be unproblematically derived from the characteristics of the prevailing mode of regulation, urban politics is not straightforwardly independent of the mode of regulation either—in practice they are partly mutually constituting. What is required is an approach to the analysis of urban politics that can unravel the causal processes that explain it whether they are grounded in the mode of regulation, in practices that are counterregulatory, or in other spheres of social life that have no strong relationship to the regulation of capital accumulation at all.

The explanatory power of regulation theory is therefore limited. The notion of regulation may be a necessary component of a satisfactory account of urban politics, but it is far from a sufficient one.

Urban Regime Theory

The concept of *urban regime* has gained significant prominence in the literature of urban studies and political science, especially in North America (Elkin, 1987; Fainstein & Fainstein, 1983; Lauria, 1994a, 1994b; Orr & Stoker, 1994; Stone 1989, 1993). Recently it has been gaining popularity in relation to British urban politics (DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1993b; Lawless, 1994). In addition, Stoker and Mossberger (1994) have argued that it is possible to strip regime theory of some of its ethnocentrism and use it more widely, including in comparative studies (see also DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1993a; Harding, 1994; Stoker, 1995). Within this developing literature the idea has been formulated in most detail by Clarence Stone, especially in his pioneering study of Atlanta (Stone, 1989). The term has been widely adopted, however, and has sometimes been used in rather imprecise ways; as Stoker puts it, "Regime terminology is used, but a regime analysis is not really provided" (1995, p. 55).

Regime theory starts from the proposition, which it shares with regulation theory, that the process of governance in complex societies is about much more than government. Successful governance, whether of a city, a nation-state, international relations, or economic processes almost always depends on the availability and mobilization of resources and actors beyond those that are formally part of government. Governing a city, particularly in the United States where the institutions of elected urban government are relatively weak, relies on the ability to form governing coalitions that bring together the formal agencies of government with interest groups from the wider society. Foremost among these, in the American context at least, are business interests. Stone (1989) carefully points out, however, that although the prominence of the business connection is hardly surprising, a regime is not inherently a coalition with business (or with any particular interest, come to that):

> In defining an urban regime as the informal arrangements through which public bodies and private interests function together to make and carry out governing decisions, bear in mind that I did not specify that the private interests are business interests. Indeed in practice, private interests are not confined to business figures. Labor-union officials, party functionaries, officers in nonprofit organizations or foundations, and church leaders may also be involved. (p. 7)

On the other hand, business interests are central in practice because regime success is evaluated (at least in part) by economic prosperity and because (in the United States but not, for example, in Britain) local governments depend heavily

on local businesses for tax revenues. Outside the United States, other interests may be more central to the coalition. In many European cities, for example, appointed local state officials, technocratic managers, and professionals play a central role. Furthermore, in many cases the most important business interests are not locally embedded to the extent evident in many examples discussed in the literature on the United States.

An urban regime can thus be defined as a coalition of interests at the urban scale, including, but not limited to, elected local government officials, that coordinates resources and thus generates governing capacity. The notion of governing capacity is important in Stone's account because it relates to his conception of power, which, he argues, is distinctive. Unlike conventional conceptions of power, which emphasize social control, or "power over," Stone claims to work with a social production model of power that emphasizes "power to." Governing capacity, or the capacity to act, is produced through coalition building. There is also an assumption, not always explicit, that a coalition must endure through time to qualify as a regime. A group that comes together to pursue a particular project and then dissipates again is not a regime. One hallmark of a regime is the willingness of actors to maintain membership of the coalition even when it is working against their short-term interests. In Stone's Atlanta case study, for example, despite the segregationist views of many of its members the downtown business elite was prepared under certain circumstances to accommodate the interests of the black middle class to maintain access to political power. For Stone, the governing coalition constitutes a single regime for as long as its members (or the interests represented in it) remain the same.

From Stone's account, it might be expected that an urban regime is rather an unusual phenomenon. He clearly regards the stability and strength of the Atlanta regime as in some ways remarkable and frequently contrasts the relatively peaceful community relations across the racial divide in Atlanta with the much more turbulent histories presented by other Southern cities. One outcome of this (and measure of regime success) is the strength of the Atlantan economy. On Stone's definition, cities without strong coalitions and marked regime effects should surely be regarded as nonregime cities. Elsewhere in the literature, however, there is an assumption (albeit sometimes an implicit one) that all, or at least most, cities have regimes and that one task of the urban political scientist is to categorize regimes into different types. Stoker and Mossberger, for example, identified three broad regime types, each with subcategories. Stone himself developed a fourfold typology of urban regimes that encompasses maintenance regimes, development regimes, middle-class progressive regimes, and regimes devoted to lower-class opportunity expansion (Stone, 1993). The inclusion of maintenance regimes in particular seems to sit oddly with the definitions

advanced in the Atlanta study. If a regime involves building a coalition between the local state and private interests to generate governing capacity, in what sense is a maintenance regime (which seems to require few resources, limited involvement of nongovernmental interests, and little active governing) a regime? This broadening of the regime concept is clearly intended to enable its application in a wider range of cases and contexts, yet it runs the risk of blunting the definition of the original formulation and, in some cases, simply using the term *urban regime* as a synonym for "urban politics" or "urban governance."

Conversely, just as I have argued that the methodology of regulation theory would not be invalidated by the absence of empirical examples of modes of regulation it could be suggested that the regime approach is not invalidated by the relative rarity of successful, enduring regimes. First, the concept of urban regime has some counterfactual force, defining what kinds of alliances would be required if certain outcomes were to be produced. Second, just as no economic activity can continue for long without a certain amount of regulation, so it might be argued no city can maintain even limited social and economic coherence without some governance, which is in turn the product of and dependent on the bringing together of a variety of agents in some form of a regime. From this perspective, a regime need not be very successful or very long lasting to be called a regime. As a coalition of social forces, a regime strives to govern, but that does not guarantee successful governance.[6] This kind of argument provides a starting point for extending the regime concept to give it more general applicability without at the same time producing insuperable problems of empirical validation.

If regimes are understood as dynamic forms that are in a continual process of formation and becoming while facing challenges and countervailing pressures, then there are some strong formal similarities with the reworked notion of regulation that I sketched above and have outlined in detail with Mark Goodwin elsewhere (Goodwin & Painter, in press). Just as I have argued that regulation theory should emphasize regulation as a process, rather than as an established state, so the emphasis in regime theory could be placed on understanding the processes and struggles involved in regime formation, reproduction, and crisis. Such an emphasis holds out the prospect of a regime theory that is theoretically commensurable with regulation theory. Whether the prospect is realized, however, will depend on precisely how the social and political processes that go into building, maintaining, or undermining a regime are conceptualized. In Stone's account, the process of regime formation is understood as grounded in rational strategies pursued by political actors. In what follows, I suggest that this is an inadequate characterization of political process but that a regime theory that problematizes the notion of rational strategy by, for example,

drawing on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* has the potential to provide some elements missing from the regulationist account in ways that are more theoretically compatible.

Conceptual Ambiguities in Regime Theory

The apparent appeal of the urban regime concept for a regulation theorist interested in urban politics lies in the emphasis in regime theory on the political processes at the urban scale, combined with its rejection of conventional pluralist and elitist approaches. On the face of it, regime theory is well placed to provide some of the explanatory links missing in the regulationist account, in that it focuses explicitly on the content of political disputes and on forms of political conflict and cooperation at the urban scale. As I showed earlier, the attraction of regime theory stems from its focus on politics and not from its concern with the urban scale. Potentially, therefore, regime theory might help explain the emergence (or, indeed, the nonemergence) of regulatory practices and thereby provide an account of the emergence and consolidation of regulatory processes at the urban scale. Despite its apparent attractions, however, several ambiguities associated with the regime approach, as presently formulated, question its commensurability with regulation theory.

The first of these relates, paradoxically, to a formal similarity between the regulationist and regime approaches. I argued earlier that regulation theory explains economic growth and development in terms of the operation of political processes, among other things. At one level, clearly, this is also exactly what regime theory does. The economic growth pattern of Atlanta in the postwar period is in part explicable, according to Stone, as an effect of the biracial urban regime in the city. It is tempting, therefore, to regard urban regime theory as a kind of regulation theory of the urban, with the regime representing a sort of urban mode of regulation. Unfortunately, however tempting, this maneuver would, I think, be misguided.

First, although urban regimes might well have certain regulatory effects, the process of regulation is significantly more complex than the operation of a regime. Many key components of regulation, even at the urban scale (such as the social organization of labor markets) fall outside the scope of a regime. Although a regime might be part of the process of regulation, it cannot form an urban mode of regulation on its own. Second, the idea of an urban (or local) mode of regulation is in any case deeply problematic because the processes of regulation affecting economic activity in a given urban area may well lie outside

of the area. The regulation of local economies is not necessarily exclusively, or even mainly, a local matter. Third, and most important for my argument, identifying an urban mode of regulation would not in any case solve the problems posed by the explanatory lacunae in the regulation approach and spelled out above: Namely, how do we account for the emergence of regulatory processes in the first place? To pose the question more directly, the existence of an urban regime can help to explain urban economic growth, but what explains the existence of an urban regime?

Here another conceptual problem arises—one which, in my view, compromises the usefulness of Stone's arguments from a regulationist point of view. Unlike regulation theory, regime theory *does* supply an explanation of the political process. In Stone's account, the explanation is not fully developed in detail, and some of its assumptions are implicit rather than clearly stated. Although this leaves some ambiguity around the explanatory framework being adopted, my provisional conclusion is that this framework is not compatible with the regulation approach.

The explanation of the regime phenomenon advanced by Stone has two main components. The first of these, it seems to me, *is* compatible with regulation theory. In contrast with the pluralist approach, Stone argues that different groups in the city have differential access to regime membership and that these differences are the product of structural inequalities in the distribution of resources. (Note that "resources" does not mean material resources only but could include cognitive, social, and symbolic resources.) Business elites control resources that make them both more attractive to local governments as coalition partners and better placed than less resource-rich groups to negotiate regime membership.

Access to resources thus allocates certain groups the status of potential regime members. The second component concerns the process through which potential regime members become and remain actual (and active) coalition partners, and here I find Stone's (1989) argument flawed. According to Stone, the emergence, nature, and reproduction of an urban regime is explicable in terms of selective incentives (pp. 186-191). The argument runs as follows: Successful urban regimes involve cooperation between partners whose immediate interests do not coincide directly and that can even be opposed. Although it may well be understood that there are long-term benefits to cooperation that outweigh the costs of cooperating, those benefits are likely to accrue to all potential regime members, whether they play a part in the regime or not. (Business-friendly policies help businesses that are not directly involved in the governing process as well as those that are.) Because cooperation involves the expenditure of time and effort, and the subordination of immediate interests to

long-term and possibly rather uncertain future gains, individuals have little incentive to cooperate, especially if any longer-term benefits that are produced are likely to be distributed widely. In short, the major problem facing a would-be regime builder is how to prevent potential regime members from gaining the benefits of regime participation without incurring any of the costs. As Stone points out, this is the classic free rider problem familiar to theorists of collective action (Olson, 1965).

Stone's solution to this conundrum is to propose that regime involvement is governed by a system of selective incentives. Selective incentives resolve the free rider problem by offering additional benefits to those potential cooperators who do in fact cooperate and denying benefits to those who do not:

> The traditional solution to the collective-action problem has been selective incentives; that is, to supplement group benefits by a system of individual rewards and punishments administered so as to support group aims. Those who go along with the group by paying dues, respecting picket lines, and so on, receive individual rewards and services; those who do not lose valuable benefits or incur sanctions. Voluntary efforts are thus complemented by inducements or coercion, individually applied. (Stone, 1989, p. 186)

Stone points out that the need for selective incentives varies according to coalition goals. Coalitions that pursue large-scale, resource-hungry, and risky projects will have greater need of additional incentives to encourage cooperation. In contrast, "caretaker" regimes will not need to mobilize collective endeavor to the same degree and will have less need of selective incentives.

Although the concept of selective incentives is not the focus of extended discussion in the Atlanta study, it is crucially important because it is, for Stone (1989), at the core of why cooperation (and hence, regimes) occur at all. Selective incentives are "what holds a governing coalition together" (p. 175), and although he recognizes that there are other factors at work, "control of selective incentives is a significant factor in determining which alignment of groups will be best able to press its case as the community's governing coalition" (p. 190).

The use of the selective incentives concept as the core of the explanation of regime origins and reproduction means that, as an explanatory framework, regime theory is grounded in the methodology of rational choice theory. Within the regime perspective, the political process is understood (in large part, at least) in terms of decision making in the face of patterns of costs and benefits in which means-end rationality is deployed to provide the greatest returns to self-interested individuals. Where "unusual" outcomes are observed, such as sustained cooperation across apparently deep social divides, Stone appeals to recent

developments in game theory (Axelrod, 1984) to show that such outcomes are explicable in rational choice terms.

If the concept of urban regimes is ultimately grounded in the rational choice model, it is difficult to see how it can be commensurable with regulation theory. Regulation theory precisely rejects the idea that processes of regulation arise through individual choices governed by the calculation of rational self-interest; yet, as I have suggested, neither are they explicable by functional necessity at the level of the system. What is required is a concept of political practice and strategy that can inform an analysis of urban politics without contradicting the methodological stance of regulation theory. If urban regime theory is to provide the complementary account of (political) agency that regulation theory currently lacks, then it will require substantial reworking to eliminate its rationalist and individualist connotations.[7]

Toward a Theory of Practice in Urban Governance

In the remainder of this chapter I want to explore the scope for just such a reworking provided by a selective appropriation of ideas from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and especially from his discussion of *The Logic of Practice* (1990). Bourdieu's writings are rich and complex, but his writing style is far from straightforward. This, coupled with a perception that his work is concerned mainly with cultural practices and is associated with anthropology and sociology, means that his ideas have gained little currency in writings on the state, urban politics, and political theory. Let me say at once that I am not proposing that Bourdieu's ideas can resolve all the tensions between regulation and regime approaches; nor are his ideas themselves without their problems (Calhoun, LiPuma, & Postone, 1993). Nevertheless, if processes of regime formation, consolidation, and crisis are to be used effectively in explaining the character of urban politics and of its contribution or otherwise to effective regulation, then it is crucial that our investigations of such processes are informed by an adequate understanding of political practices. Although Bourdieu does not address issues of political practice explicitly, the idea of practice itself is central to his work, and is formulated in terms that explicitly reject rational choice perspectives.[8]

Bourdieu argues that conventional theoretical approaches can be divided into two broad categories: objectivism and subjectivism. Neither of these, he suggests, is capable of accounting adequately for practice. This is hardly a novel argument, of course, but transcending the division between objectivism and

subjectivism seems extraordinarily hard. For Bourdieu, objectivism is epitomized, but not limited to, structural anthropology. In its concern only with the objective conditions of practice, objectivism is unable to account for the relationship between those structures and the experiential meanings that are implicated in practice. Paradoxically, Bourdieu (1990) writes of objectivism, "beneath its air of radical materialism, this philosophy of nature . . . amounts to a form of idealism" (p. 41). In contrast, subjectivism suffers from the inverse paradox. For Bourdieu, the paradigm case (but again not the only example) of subjectivism is the Rational Actor Model. As I have suggested, the rational actor model underpins the notion of political practice implicit in conventional regime theory. This approach locates the origins of practice in the mental decision making of the rational actor, which appears to constitute a voluntaristic approach to the explanation of practice. As Bourdieu points out, however—and this is the mirror-paradox to that associated with objectivism—by proposing that practice is governed by the rational calculation of self interest, the rational actor model in fact involves a determinism in which practice is governed by the objective conditions defining an actor's interests.

For these apparently opposed positions, which paradoxically appear to collapse into each other on closer inspection, Bourdieu would substitute a theory of practice. Practice for Bourdieu (1990) is neither the determinate outcome of objective structures nor the product of voluntaristic decision making:

> One has to escape from the realism of the structure, to which objectivism necessarily leads when it hypostatizes these relations by treating them as realities already constituted outside of the history of the group—without falling back into subjectivism, which is quite incapable of giving an account of the necessity of the social world. To do this, one has to return to practice, the site of the dialectic of the *opus operatum* and the *modus operandi*; of the objectified products and the incorporated products of historical practice; of structures and *habitus*. (p. 52)

Thus, Bourdieu has no wish to dispense with the concept of structure—on the contrary, it remains central. Rather than taking structure as pregiven, however, he problematizes its conditions of production and considers how structures are themselves produced through social practice. Equally, he does not dispense with categories such as experience or subjectivity but, again, transforms them from primordial or essential features into social products that have their own conditions of existence and processes of determination.

The concept of *habitus* is central to Bourdieu's (1990) theory of practice. In a passage that hints at complementarity with the regulation approach, it is defined as

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively "regulated" and "regular" without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (p. 53)

For Bourdieu, the concept of habitus is the mediating concept between structures and practices (Thrift, 1983, p. 30). Although the concept of habitus is somewhat opaque, it is clearly not a synonym for context. Bourdieu (1990) opposes those who would "correct the structuralist model by appealing to 'context' or 'situation' to account for variations, exceptions, and accidents . . . situational analysis remains locked into the framework of rule and exception" (p. 53). The implications of Bourdieu's formulations are that all practice is generated through habitus. Habitus consists of *dispositions,* a term that in French carries the twin meanings of that which disposes one to act in a certain way (predisposition) and that which is the result of a process (arrangement or distribution). Habitus is thus both product and generator of practice, but in generating practice, it predisposes rather than determines. In much of Bourdieu's (1990) work, the notion used in analysis tends to be class habitus, but there is no reason in principle why relations other than class should not be generative of habitus. Habitus has an infinite capacity for generating "thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions" but only those compatible with its own conditions of production:

> The most improbable practices are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable. (p. 54)

According to Bourdieu, the notion of habitus operates in relation to the concept of *field.* The field delineates the scope of operation of habitus by differentiating that part of the social whole in which the practical sense involved in the operation of habitus is effective. Beyond the field lie other fields in which the rules of the game, and hence the habitus, are different.

There is space here for only the most preliminary outline of the relationship between the concepts of practical sense, habitus, and field and the idea of urban regimes, and this is not an attempt to present a developed Bourdieusian urban political theory. In any case, as one commentator puts it, the usefulness of Bourdieu's work lies in its being "good to think with" (Jenkins, 1992) rather

than a template that can be unproblematically laid over any area of substantive investigation.

As I showed earlier, what regulation theory needs, and what regime theory purports to offer, is a theoretically informed account of the dynamics of the urban governance process. Regulation theory is well designed to interpret the impact and effects of regimes on the urban economy because the whole approach incorporates the idea that economic activity is socially and politically mediated and produced. The regulationist account is weak in explaining the genesis and formation of regimes (and other political processes) in the first place. At the same time, Stone's use of the rational choice concept of selective incentives is not compatible with the regulationist perspective.

The notion of habitus provides an alternative approach[9] to understanding the processes by which potential participants in a regime come to join the coalition (or not, as the case may be). Focusing on the ways in which particular groups of actors make practical sense of their political world it problematizes the idea of rational decision making. First, habitus does not start from the erroneous assumption that political decisions are rational, or rationally arrived at. Second, and by extension, habitus allows a whole range of other influences to be brought into an analysis of regime formation. Questions of bureaucratic culture, ethical judgment, irrational assumptions, trust and mutuality, local chauvinism, political ideology, and a host of others take their place as potential parts of a multicausal explanation of political behavior.

Centrally important in habitus formation is the role played by knowledge, information, and political socialization. Different regime participants do not just have different amounts of knowledge about the conditions under which they are acting, they also *know in different ways,* and these different ways of knowing bear heavily on decisions about whether or not to participate in any particular governing arrangement. In the habitus knowledge appears to be instinctive and natural: It is labeled common sense and determines the actors view of the field and of the prospects associated with particular courses of action. A focus on the production of particular types of knowledge and ways of knowing in different actor groups therefore provides a way of "operationalizing" the notion of habitus in research terms.

This can be illustrated with some (admittedly speculative) examples of the habitus of different actor groups in the field of urban governance, which are summarized in Table 7.1. Note that this is not intended as a comprehensive list of the actors involved in urban governance, the precise contents of which will vary according to the empirical case being considered.

This formulation, although merely an outline, can provide the starting point for an approach to urban regimes based on the following six propositions.

Table 7.1 *Habitus* of Different Actor Groups in Urban Governance

Examples of Actor Groups	*Habitus Grounded In*
Local politicians	Political socialization through past party or community activism or machine politics; common sense based on political deal making and "fixing" or grassroots support and legitimacy
Private sector business managers	Socialization associated with entrepreneurialism, being businesslike, "getting things done," ends justifying means, profitability, local embeddedness, business and property security; different values dominate in different sectors and vary with firm size and ownership relations
Public sector professionals (e.g., urban planners, accountants)	Codes of professional conduct; procedures heavily influenced by norms and expectations generated in the process of professional training and accreditation; common sense based on detachment, objectivity, and public service
Public sector bureaucrats	Bureaucratic knowledges; norms associated with accountability, hierarchy, record keeping, and surveillance; means predominate over ends; maintenance of organizational structure
Unelected public bodies (e.g., U.K. local Quangos)	Knowledges imported (mainly) from private sector, though with some public service elements; ends predominate over means; culture of confidentiality; culture of formal, legal (rather than democratic) accountability; common sense based on getting the job done
Community organizations	Quite variable but can include knowledges based in combination of concrete experience and abstract ideals; common sense frequently based on "us-them" or "David-and-Goliath" metaphors; cultures of self-help coupled to rhetorics of civil and social rights
Voluntary sector	Varied; frequently grounded in notions of charity or self-help; rhetoric of "serving the community"; knowledge base varies with size and type of organization from amateurism and "muddling through" to highly professionalized

1. There is no one unitary rationality that governs political behavior. Political activity (such as participation in a regime-style coalition) is governed by a whole range of rationalities and irrationalities, which vary systematically according to the kinds of actors and institutions involved. What makes sense to

a business person will be very different from what makes sense to a local politician or community group.

2. Rationalities and the knowledges in which they are based change over time. The building of a regime alters the field in which agents act. In the United Kingdom for example, local voluntary sector organizations have been drawn into increasingly formal and contractual relations with the local state as surrogate service providers. This clearly has the potential to alter the norms and understandings (the common sense) through which such organizations interpret their political world. Table 7.1, therefore, needs to be read as a snapshot of a dynamic process.

3. Practical sense and habitus are stratified and differentiated according to the different fields in which they are effective. In one sense the sphere of urban politics is a single field, with its own particular norms and habitus, but it may be better to see urban politics as constituted at the intersection of a series of different fields (local government, business, community, public and voluntary sectors, and so on) each of which provides a different set of understandings, discourses, and knowledge. This suggests that the problems of regime construction are significantly more complex than that of overcoming a free rider problem among nongovernmental actors. What is involved is no less than mediation, negotiation, and translation between a variety of different practical logics, world views, and ways of knowing.

4. Once a regime is established it may form its own field with its own habitus as actors are drawn into a new set of shared assumptions and practical understandings. Where a regime habitus emerges with a good fit to the regime field (that is, regime practice is well oriented to the regime's conditions of existence), there is scope for an enduring urban political coalition, the explanation for which does not depend on the notion of selective incentives.

5. Fields may be understood as potential "sites of regulation" (or counter-regulation). Processes of regulation operate to promote system reproduction through time. Thus, an enduring fit between habitus, practice, and field that is also contingently effective in stabilizing some aspect of the social whole provides a way of accounting for the emergence and development of regulatory processes without resorting either to functionalism or to voluntarism. This formulation can therefore help resolve the explanatory problems posed by the limits of regulation theory that I outlined at the beginning of the paper.

6. In Bourdieu's work, the notion of field is a *social* concept designating a part of the social whole within which habitus is effective. Fields also have a *spatial* structure relating to both their scale and scope, however. The field of the urban regime operates at the urban scale and incorporates within its scope a limited range of the agents in the city. The fields from which the participants

come, however, can be very different in scale and scope. A manager in a global corporation operates in a field that is very different (socially and spatially) from a community political activist. I previously suggested that the urban scale was not an inherent difficulty for the regulation approach. If fields are understood as potential sites of regulation, then the fact of their differing spatialities holds out the possibility of a spatially sophisticated regulation theoretic account of urban politics, in which a reworked regime theory can play an important explanatory role.

Conclusion: Strategy, Rationality, and Urban Politics

In conclusion, I want to address a potential criticism of the application of Bourdieu's ideas to *political* practice. The notion of habitus may help understand how the practices of everyday life are related to social structures, but it might be argued that political practices are unlike the practices of everyday life in being the *product of strategic calculation* and are therefore more amenable to the forms of analysis based on the rational actor model that Stone implicitly adopts and Bourdieu explicitly rejects.[10]

Strategy is a term that is probably undertheorized in the literature of social and political theory. In a debate in the pages of the journal *Sociology* (Crow, 1989, pp. 1-24; Knights & Morgan, 1990, pp. 475-483; Watson, 1990, pp. 485-498), Crow (1989) argued that using the term *strategy* usually involves adopting (at least implicitly) a rational choice perspective because it carries connotations of conscious decision making and the pursuit of rational objectives. Other protagonists in the debate, however, adopted other positions. William Watson for example argued that strategy need not be understood as involving rational calculation and that some strategies are value-figurative, rather than purposive-rational (1990). Knights and Morgan (1990) argued in favor of making strategy an object of social analysis, rather than a tool thereof. This allows us to distinguish two uses of the concept of strategy. First, it can be understood as a phenomenon in the social world that can be analyzed through the Bourdieusian notion of practice. Second, it can be understood as an analytic tool, and here Bourdieu has his own notion of strategy that he carefully distinguishes from the rational choice model. I will briefly consider each of these.

Although I do not in the end agree with Knights and Morgan's rejection of the concept as an analytical device, their argument provides an interesting link with my previous discussion that returns us neatly to the problems of Stone's

account of selective incentives. Knights and Morgan argue that as an object of social analysis, the concept of strategy cannot be seen as a generic category but must be understood in relation to those areas of social life in which strategic action or "strategizing" is a part of social practice. They identify military conflict and business organization as two areas in which the concept of strategy is used self-consciously and where it forms a part of the content of practice, rather than being a conceptual framework within which to understand practice. Although they do not focus on urban politics and political organizations, clearly the concept of strategy is also used substantively in developing political practice.

As substantive phenomena political strategies *do* involve a rational choice style notion of means-ends rationality. Indeed the arguments of rational choice theory can be drawn on *by actors themselves* in developing strategies and in understanding what they are doing as strategic. Does this then mean that such behavior can be explained by rational choice approaches? From the Bourdieusian perspective, the answer is still no because the practice of strategizing is in principle a practice like other practices: generated through habitus and enabled by dispositions that derive from structured and structuring structures. According to Bourdieu,

> It is, of course, never ruled out that the responses of the "habitus" may be accompanied by a strategic calculation tending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the habitus performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into expected objective. But these responses are first defined, without any calculation, in relation to objective potentialities, immediately inscribed in the present, things to do or not to do, things to say or not to say, in relation to a probable, "upcoming" future which . . . puts itself forward with an urgency and a claim to existence that excludes all deliberation. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53)

If the approach adopted by Bourdieu is applied to urban politics, therefore, the question changes from

Do agents act in their own rational self-interest (through selective incentives)?

to

How is that particular form of political agency and political subjectivity generated that seeks to calculate its rational self-interest and aims to act strategically to enhance it?

The concept of habitus can be used to examine the production of different types of political subjects (some political subjects engage in strategic practices, whereas others do not). It marks rationality and responsiveness to selective incentives as phenomena to be explained, rather than the source of explanation.

Bourdieu's ideas of habitus and practice imply that *strategizing* is a particular type of practice generated among certain social groups (e.g., politicians, business leaders) by a particular habitus, but Bourdieu also has a concept of *strategy* that he explicitly differentiates from the rational choice model. In an interview he argued that

> far from being posited as such in an explicit, conscious project, the strategies suggested by habitus as a "feel for the game" aim . . . toward the "objective potentialities" immediately given in the immediate present. And one may wonder, as you do, whether we should then talk of "strategy" at all. It is true that the word is strongly associated with the intellectualist and subjectivist tradition which has dominated modern Western philosophy, and which is now again on the upswing with R[ational] A[ctor] T[heory], a theory so well suited to satisfy the spiritualist *point d'honneur* of intellectuals. This is not a reason, however, not to use it with a totally different theoretical intention, to designate the objectively oriented lines of action which social agents continually construct in and through practice. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 128-129)

Strategies in this sense are paths across fields, the directions of which are determined by habitus but that can result in changes in the nature of the field. Where two or more fields intersect, as I have suggested is the case in the formation of an urban regime, there is scope for the habitus to be disrupted and for other strategies to be developed in relation to other fields. Agents bring to the regime the cultural assumptions designated by the habitus of their own field, but the disjuncture between these and the other fields involved provides a potential source of dynamism and (strategic) political change.

In this chapter I have not suggested that the work of Bourdieu can provide an easy solution to the problem of reconciling urban regime theory with regulation theory. I do think, however, it can provide a starting point for reworking regime theory in ways that remove its rationalist assumptions, which are some of the main stumbling blocks to an effective dialogue between the two. Although the impacts of urban regimes on local economies can be assimilated effectively within a geographically sensitive regulation approach, the conventional account of regime formation is more problematic. The concept of habitus problematizes the explanatory variables in Stone's account of regime formation and thus opens the door to a version of regime theory that gives full weight to a

whole range of different forms of potential political practice, based in a diverse set of political knowledge, understandings, rationalities, and subjectivities.

Notes

1. I use the terms *counterregulation* and *counterregulatory* to refer to social relations, processes, and practices that tend to undermine or disrupt regulation. Because regulation is not automatic or guaranteed in a structural-functionalist manner, social systems involve processes that tend to generate crises of integration and regulation as well as those that tend to generate system integration and regulation. The extent to which any particular system is actually regulated will depend on the mix and interaction between regulatory and counterregulatory tendencies.

2. I share with Bob Jessop (1992a) the view that the term *fordism* is most appropriately used to refer to a mode of regulation (as opposed to, say, a type of labor process or a regime of accumulation).

3. Mark Goodwin and I (Painter & Goodwin, 1995) have argued that contemporary forms of uneven development can undermine the prospects for the emergence of coherent modes of regulation in the future. As I suggested earlier, however, the regulation approach does not stand or fall with the concept of mode regulation.

4. At this point the argument is entirely compatible with the regime approach, the focus of which is so often the impact of urban politics on economic growth and development. As I shall show, however, the overall compatibility of the two approaches is more questionable.

5. Of course, new regulatory processes and modes of regulation do have effects that in turn condition the character of regulation in a process of mutual constitution. What I am concerned with here, however, are the changes that lead to the emergence of new modes of regulation in the first place.

6. I am grateful to Mickey Lauria for clarifying this point and suggesting the phrasing.

7. In addition to the ideas presented in the remainder of this chapter, some other potential reworkings are developed in other contributions to this book.

8. I have not rehearsed the general arguments against the rational choice approach, partly because they are well known, but more important because my principal interest here is in commensurability with regulation theory, rather than a general critique.

9. Alex Demirovic (1988) argues that the concept of habitus is also incompatible with regulation theory. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to address his arguments here, but in any case, I think that the idea *is* worth pursuing because of the questions it raises about mainstream accounts of political practice. It may well be that the concept of habitus, like that of regime, also requires adaptation. I am very grateful to Bob Jessop for providing me with a copy of his own translation of Demirovic's unpublished paper.

10. Notwithstanding his strenuous denunciations of the rational actor model, Bourdieu's own formulation is seen by some as still caught at least partly within the rational choice framework (Calhoun et al., 1993).